

Nav Samvatsar & Arya Samaj Sthapna Divas

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April 02, 2022: Chaitra Shukla Pratipada is the 1st day of the waxing phase of the moon, lunar month of Chaitra March-April. It's the Vedic (Hindu) New Year as per the Sanatan Dharma calendar. It marks the completion of the Creation with the human species and the Revelation of the Vedas to mankind.

On that day starts the year 1,960, 853, 123 in Shristi Samvat, year 5,123 of the present KaliYuga and year 2079 of the Vikram era.

What is the Arya Samaj? Arya Samaj is the *samaj*, assembly of *Aryas*.

Maharshi Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj on April 10, 1875 (CE), as a lifeline for the disintegrated and factional ridden society which was on the brink of annihilation. The political, economic and social conditions prevailing in the nineteenth century presented to a dismal picture of a society: Illiteracy ...prevailed; ignorance ...abounded; superstitions ...rampant; knowledge ...totally eclipsed; the essence of dharma ...lost; practice of irrational rituals and blind faith ...dominant; social evils ...widespread; cultural values ...eroded; centuries of foreign domination ...reduced the glory and valor of Aryavarta to shambles.

An Arya is a virtuous, person who is noble in thoughts, words and actions (*manasaa-vaachaa-karmanaa*), shines with exemplary character, deeds and nature (*guna-karma-svabhaava*), and strives to create a better society, thus raise people from the status of social animals to that of humane social beings.

The word *Arya* is ...more-than-often... misunderstood and given a narrow meaning - a religion, race, society, creed, community ...etc.

Arya is a word with the highest meaning. Arya is not bound by race, color, geographical and other man-made barriers. Like a lustrous sparkling diamond from a mine comes out of rough stone after attentive cutting and polishing processes, an *Arya* is someone whose personality has been trimmed down by the tenets of Dharma (virtue). *Someone enrolled in the register of members of an Arya Samaj may call himself an Arya only when he abides himself to its principles.*

Arya is not a new word: When requested to establish an organization to continue the reform movement, Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati came forward with the name of Arya Samaj; **the word Arya being as old as the Vedas.** Various mantras of the Vedas refer to *Arya* as an honorable person (*sakala shubh, uttama, dharmik guna-karma-swabhāva, vidyā dharmādi utkrishta swabhāva ācharana yukta jana*).

An *Arya* upholds purity of mind, body & spirit, on the path to be masters of material and spiritual treasures. Of all living beings, the human birth is of the highest order, indeed endowed with intellect and exceptional opportunity. The soul residing in the human garb is empowered to purge itself of previous samskāras (imprints) and attain the goals of human life – *dharmā, artha, kāmā, moksha*; Dharma as the foundations of a truly humane life, honest earnings, stay within the limits of dharma while enjoying life, and liberation from the cycle of birth and death to be in the eternal bliss of Īshvar (God).

An Arya always looks for good qualities in others and through introspection (*Dusron ke guna aur apne galtiyan ko dekhā karein...*). He/she is ever on the lookout searching for his/her own flaws and views criticism positively, thus to purge his/her flaws.

‘Indram vardhanto apturah krinvanto vishwamāryam | Apaghnanto arāvnah ||’ (RV 9.63.5) is a prayer where we seek the blessings of the Almighty to be fearless, energetic in dealing with (i) devious, immoral, corrupt ...unethical behaviour, and (ii) the barriers to enlightenment, namely- ignorance and the ancillary negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, anger, jealousy, desire, depression ...etc. (*avidyā... raga, dvesha...*). Only when evil is thrown away that goodness can settle and the whole world will become Arya, i.e. - noble.

Arya as defined by others: Arya in Buddhism denotes a scholarly person who dwells in dharma (virtue). Jainism refers to the *sādhavi* or lady who has become an ascetic, renouncing to worldly pleasures as Aryā. Sikhism specifies that Arya means a noble, valorous and virtuous person who sacrifices himself for the cause of dharma.

Valmiki in the Rāmāyana refers to Shri Rāma is called Aryaputra because of his noble qualities and Sitā as Aryā, i.e. virtuous lady. In the Adi Parva (44.7) of the Mahābhārata a prince is called Aryamati because of his ennobled intellect.

Shri Aurobindo writes: *“An Arya is a particular ethical and social ideal, an ideal of well governed life, candour, courtesy, nobility, straight dealing, courage, gentleness, purity, humanity, compassion, protection of the weak, liberality, observance of social duty, eagerness for knowledge, social accomplishment, there is no word in human speech that has a nobler history.”*

Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati handed over the ten principles of the Ārya Sāmāj as a roadmap social betterment, progress in all spheres of life: personal, social, economic and political. In a nut shell, the 1st and 2nd principles pertain to the duty of man towards God; the 3rd, 4th and 5th focus upon the duty of man towards himself; and the 6th to 10th point out the duty of man as a social being. None of these principles incline towards self-interest. They are eternal with universal appeal and acceptability.

The benchmark to measure the success rate in achieving its objectives is the sum total of our individual efforts to live up to the Vedic ideals, summed up in the 10 principles of the Arya Samaj. Pointing fingers at others result in three fingers pointing towards our own self. Let us all align our thoughts, speech and deeds in line with the Vedic edicts... the world will be transformed by the transformation of each and every single unit... the smallest component... the individual. *Pehle ham sudhrein... Samaj aur jag apne āp sudhar jayeinge.*